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HYDERABAD POLITICS:

AN

ANSWER TO MR. GORST, M.P.

GRATTAN GEARY

HYDERABAD POLITICS.

PERHAPS the most unflattering and unexpected of the sketches of things Indian to which we have had to submit at the hands of itinerant politicians doing India in six weeks, is the clever and remarkable contribution to the *Fortnightly Review* of April last, due to the facile pen of Mr. J. E. Gorst, Q.C., M.P. It is not often that matters of considerable importance have been so completely and picturesquely put out of focus, and the really important features, from the point of view of history and politics, cheerily ignored altogether. Mr. Gorst's sketch of "The Kingdom of the Nizam" has no particular relation to the state of things existing in His Highness's territories. Those of us who are acquainted with the facts accept the paper as an amusing squib, which cannot do much harm when the necessary deductions can be made, and the omitted facts supplied from personal knowledge. But there are very few who are in a position to discriminate in regard to the presentment of the politics of a Native State, and one who was personally cognisant of all that went on in the beginning of the year in Hyderabad, and has since been able to verify his impressions, may usefully place on record his dissent from Mr. Gorst's travesty of what took place in that city last February. In what I shall now set forth I will deal wholly and exclusively with facts which can be authenticated and

proved to the satisfaction of any reasonable court of law.

The case as put forward in the paper to which I refer is this : That Lord Ripon has just handed over nine millions of grievously oppressed tillers of the soil to the rule of a boy of 17, with a Prime Minister of 20, who are both given to drink and plunged in the excesses of the Zenana. That His Lordship, while performing this astoundingly stupid and wanton act, was so taken up with the poms and vanity of the wicked City of Hyderabad that neither he nor his friends probably ever bestowed a thought upon the unhappy people by the sweat of whose brow the wealth so lavishly spent on their entertainment was produced. That the father of the Prime Minister, the famous Sir Salar Jung, skilful diplomatist and clever politician as he was, was a complete failure as an administrator, and he knew it. That his pretended reforms were a swindle and a delusion, designed for the purpose of hoodwinking the British Government ; that his budgets were fictitious and fraudulent, and that he left the State two millions to the bad. That under his administration the people were scandalously oppressed ; that the country was eaten up by foreign officials, who ruined it by their exactions, natives of Hyderabad being apparently, from sheer devilment, kept out of official employment by their own countrymen in their own country. The Viceroy and Governor-General, careless of all these things, deliberately perpetuated the corrupt oppression which was grinding to pieces nine millions of people, helpless as cattle, by appointing the son of Sir Salar Jung to the Prime Ministership, and that too while there was an alternative

Minister, a mild and conciliatory Hindu who, although somewhat eccentric in his mode of conducting business, carrying his documents of State about with him in his pockets, and giving audiences at midnight in a cellar, was yet thoroughly well-affected to the British power, shrewd in his judgment, strongly opposed to the foreign element by which the State was being eaten up, and quite eager to make a clean sweep of the rotten system which had grown up under the wretched misgovernment of Sir Salar Jung. This old and experienced Minister was rejected, and all chance of a reign of honesty and capacity in Hyderabad was at an end.

Now let us see what are the facts relative to this admirable Minister of Mr. Gorst's choice. The Peshcar, Raja Narendra, was appointed senior administrator after the death of Sir Salar Jung, having for his colleague Mir Liak Ali, now better known by the title of Salar Jung, the eldest son of the deceased Minister. The Government of India made this arrangement at the suggestion of Sir Stenart Bayley—one of the most experienced and successful Residents ever sent to Hyderabad—in order to bridge over the interval of a year which had yet to elapse before the Nizam attained his majority, fixed by the law and custom of Native States at 18 years. It was expressly laid down that the Peshcar, who was an old and feeble man, but had enjoyed considerable experience in administration under Sir Salar Jung, should give the major portion of the actual work to his young colleague, and himself supply the guidance which official experience qualified him, it was supposed, to give. There was a Council of Regency, but the two administrators were alone to

carry on the executive work. Within a few weeks of assuming office, the Peshcar completely ignored his colleague, and, in spite of the remonstrances of Mir Liak Ali, he kept the whole of the affairs of Government in his own hands. We have seen Mr. Gorst's description of his peculiar methods of conducting business. Let us add that he was addicted to opium-eating, a practice which was necessary to keep his failing vitality from sinking under the pressure of State affairs. He refused to work with the official hierarchy, composed mainly of educated natives trained in the British system, and lent by the Government of India to the State of Hyderabad to reform the administration. There was a certain kitmutgar, or butler, who became an important personage of State. He and another man wholly illiterate, and who had not so long before filled some humble employment at ten shillings a month, were intermediaries between the general public and His Excellency the Peshcar. The ordinary work of administration came almost to a stand.

The reforms laboriously instituted by Sir Salar Jung with the approval of the Government of India, fared badly under the new *régime*. A certain Hunmunt Rao, who had formerly filled the office of Treasurer, committing therein large peculations, for which he was heavily fined in treble the amount, and banished the city for five years, was actually appointed Inspector-General of all the Departments and special Supervisor of Accounts to the Treasury. Hunmunt Rao naturally hated the Salar Jung family, seeing that the late Minister had detected his defalcations and caused him to be severely punished. When he found himself again in the Treasury, the accounts of which are so intricate

that very few outsiders are competent to understand them, he was able, without much trouble, to make out a sort of counter-charge against the memory of the late Minister calculated to tarnish the name of Sir Salar and discredit his sons with the Government of India. It was said in Hyderabad that Hunmunt Rao offered to accomplish this measure of vengeance and of policy on the condition of being restored to the office of Treasurer. Young Salar Jung appealed to the Resident against so monstrous an appointment, and the Resident, Mr. Cordery, protested, but without any practical result.

The honest Treasurer had not been long in office when he passed an order, at the instance of the Peshcar, for the payment of a sum of Rs. 82,000 to Mr. Thomas Palmer, a Eurasian Barrister, who had become the Peshcar's unofficial adviser and bosom friend. Salar Jung and Bushir-ud-Dowla, one of the Members of the Council of Regency, inquired for what purpose so large a sum was taken from the Treasury. The Peshcar stated that it was required to make large purchases for the Nizam in Bombay. Salar Jung asked His Highness whether this were the fact. His Highness replied that the statement was absolutely false ; he did not want to make any purchases whatever. It was ascertained that the money, instead of being sent to Bombay, was taken by Mr. T. Palmer to Calcutta. The Peshcar was pressed for a further explanation, and he gave one wide as the poles from that already given. The money was needed, he stated, to pay for advice in connection with His Highness's approaching accession. It has been asserted in a paper of general circulation in India, the *Pioneer*, that the

money was really drawn as a fee for Mr. Gorst, whose advice was sought by the Peshcar, and that statement has never been contradicted. Either Mr. Gorst, or some one else, drew up a document which filled two pages and a half of a printed sheet of foolscap, that was subsequently handed by the Peshcar to the Viceroy as a statement of his proposals for the future government of Hyderabad. There was certainly nothing in the document in question which would seem to an unenthusiastic reader to be worth Rs. 82,000. It proposed that there should be no consultative Council, that a Dewan should have sole and undivided authority, and that to counteract the impulsive temper of youth, His Highness's Dewan should be a person of mature age. It was not natural that at his age he should cherish the ambitious projects which are natural to the young; but such as he was, his whole life was devoted to the State, and his services are at the disposal of His Highness, if they were required. Whether Mr. Gorst wrote this, I cannot say, lacking the confidence of those who declare that hardly any doubt can exist upon the point; but it is unquestionable that whoever wrote the two pages and a half of foolscap, of which we have just seen the purport, was, according to His Excellency the Peshcar himself, paid eighty-two thousand rupees out of the Treasury of Hyderabad for the job. His Excellency is evidently quite satisfied that His Highness the Nizam got good value for the money. Mr. Palmer was applied to for information upon the point, but he cautiously referred the Governments of Hyderabad and of India to the Peshcar for any further information that might be required.

It would have been inconvenient for Mr. Palmer

to answer impertinent questions with regard to drawing from the Hyderabad Treasury. The Resident wanted to know why a sum of twenty thousand rupees and another of seven thousand had been drawn by that gentleman about the same time. Mr. Palmer, who is a Barrister by profession, had won a very big case against the Hyderabad Government, and the fee promised him by his client for success was twenty thousand rupees. The Peshcar, it was alleged, authorised payment of the amount by city bankers, who were to be refunded by the State with nine per cent. interest. This was denied in general terms by the Peshcar, who, however, owned that he had paid seven thousand rupees out of the Nizam's Treasury on his own responsibility, but he would not say for what purpose.

Other large disbursements were made from the Treasury by the complaisant Treasurer of the shrewd old Peshcar, who had such a horror of foreign adventurers and their corrupt and oppressive ways. Fifty thousand rupees were given to one man, who was understood to owe the Government eighty thousand. Another was given forty-two thousand, another twenty-five thousand; but I won't be tiresome. Mr. Gorst is very severe upon Sir Salar Jung's wastefulness in allowing two Dufterdars, or keepers of accounts, whom he disestablished in the beginning of his administration as inconvenient checks upon him, to retain their emoluments, for which they gave no return whatever to the State. One of these men was Raja Sheoraj, who was deprived of the succession to his father in the hereditary office, on the ground that his progenitor had fleeced the Treasury out of all reason; but being an important

personage, he was allowed to retain the family percentage on the revenue when it amounted [in 1853] to about half a million sterling. The thrifty Peshcar gave him the percentage on the present revenue, which amounts to some two millions. He, however, utilised the services of Raja Sheoraj in a manner of which possibly Mr. Gorst would approve. A dispute between an uncle and two nephews to property worth three hundred and sixty thousand pounds had been adjudicated upon by the Hyderabad High Court. The uncle demurred to the decree; the Peshcar authorised the Raja Sheoraj to review the High Court's decision, which he did, and reversed it, the estate being made over to the uncle in trust for the minors, whose declared enemy he was known to be.

Was it morally or politically possible for Lord Ripon to accede to the Peshcar's disinterested advice—set forth in a document which had cost the State Rs. 82,000—and appoint him sole Minister of Hyderabad with undivided authority? The Peshcar was well-intentioned, no doubt, but he was weak and incompetent, and a ready tool in the hands of the unscrupulous people who surrounded him. He was the survival and representative of a tradition of misgovernment, much worse than himself, which it had been the entire purpose of the long administration of Sir Salar Jung to reform out of existence. He was the grandson of another and more potent Peshcar, the infamous Chandu Lall, who, from the year 1806 to the year 1843, was the *âme damnée* of Hyderabad. The extravagance and oppression and general misgovernment which prevailed during the period of his ascendancy, were the scandal of India, and brought the State

almost to destruction. The advisability of taking the Hyderabad Territories under British administration, as the sole means of extricating them from the abyss into which they were plunged, had to be taken into serious consideration when Chandu Lall, in 1813, was forced to resign. Three years after his resignation, Sir Salar Jung's uncle was appointed Prime Minister, and endeavoured to institute reforms, which were distasteful to the Nizam. The Resident wished the Government of India to sustain him, but Lord Hardinge, probably influenced by the experience of what had come of sustaining Chandu Lall against his master, refused, saying that, as the treaty stood, there could be no more than advice "until a crash came." Suraj-ul-Mulk was dismissed in 1818. The hopeless confusion of the finances consequent upon the profligate mal-administration of the old Peshear, who had alienated the revenues wholesale, continued. The large arrears due to the Government of India for the maintenance of the Hyderabad Contingent, the cost of which had been shamelessly swollen, could not be liquidated.

The Contingent had sprung up without the consent of the Nizam during the administration of Chandu Lall, who knew that he could not rely on the support of the Nizam's ordinary troops. "It is, in reality," said Lord Metcalfe, "a joint concern between Rajah Chandu Lall and us." The cost of the Contingent equalled more than a third of the gross revenues of the kingdom. Lord Dalhousie insisted upon immediate payment of the arrears, or a large cession of territory in lieu thereof. In 1851 Suraj-ul-Mulk was again made Prime Minister, and endeavoured to effect an arrangement. The Nizam refused the absolute ces-

sion of territory, but an assignment or mortgage of the Berars and other districts for the liquidation of arrears, and the payment of the Contingent in the future, was enforced, the Minister being informed that orders had been issued for the march of British troops from Poona to Hyderabad if the signature were not given in twenty-four hours. All this was the direct result of the old Peshcar's ruinous mismanagement and disloyalty. Suraj-ul-Mulk died in May 1853, leaving a young nephew of twenty-four, Salar Jung, who was appointed Dewan in his place.

To decry the work of reconstruction which Sir Salar Jung accomplished in the face of enormous difficulties between the year 1853 and 1877, when he came into collision with Lord Lytton, is simply to confess complete unacquaintance with the condition of things with which that Minister was confronted when he was unexpectedly called to the head of the administration on his uncle's death. He beheld chaos and ruin all around him. The most fertile provinces of the State had been handed over to British administration under the circumstances just mentioned; the revenue had been alienated to such an extent by the old Peshcar that what was left of it only amounted to £600,000. The State was hopelessly in debt to the Arab leaders of the mercenaries, who were a danger to the Government. The country was in parts almost depopulated owing to the exactions to which the ryots were subjected by the farmers of the revenue. There was no trade to speak of, no postal system, no dispensaries, no schools. There was no police. It was unsafe to walk abroad even in the suburbs of Hyderabad. Europeans could not enter the city without a guard. The reforms

which Salar Jung's uncle had desired to introduce had now become imperative. The young Minister never had the cordial support of the old Nizam, who illogically attributed to his family the pain connected with the assignment of the Borars. Nevertheless, the great work was undertaken with energy, and carried out with a diplomacy and a persistence such as perhaps no other of Sir Salar's contemporaries could have displayed. The alienated districts were one by one redeemed from the military money-lenders. The public credit was gradually restored. The troops were got into better hand, and largely reduced in numbers as opportunity occurred. Some of the assigned territories were restored by the British Government as a reward for Sir Salar Jung's loyalty during the Mutiny. A complete remodelling of the administration, on the model of that prevailing in British Territory, was undertaken and carried out after the death of the Nizam, when Sir Salar Jung became Regent. The revenue, which was some £600,000, was raised in the course of his administration to over £2,000,000. The sweeping charge that Sir Salar's finance was fictitious and that the country is bankrupt is founded upon the representations of Hunmunt Rao. The extent of the exaggerations indulged in may be inferred from the fact that whereas the Peshcar declared in a document, said to be redacted by Mr. Gorst before being submitted to the Viceroy, that the indebtedness of the country amounts to four hundred and forty-nine lakhs, say in round numbers four and a half millions sterling, Mr. Gorst in his article discreetly reduces the amount to two millions sterling, evidently on the principle that it is best not to believe half of what you hear. The

Minister and the Accountant-General having investigated the accounts have since drawn up a memorandum which shows that the State liabilities come to a total of one hundred and twenty-four lakhs, say a million and a quarter sterling, of which some twenty-two lakhs are due to the Nizam's private treasury. Another apparently formidable item consist of arrears of stipends due to a number of village officials who did not pay their land assessment, which should be set off against a good portion of the money due. The balance will be liquidated by additional grants of Government lands. Some thirteen lakhs, included in the liabilities, are really Government assets, such as post office and customs receipts in local hands, fines, &c., that may be appealed against, but will for the greater part remain at the disposal of Government. Eighteen lakhs, set down as due to bankers and others, are covered by mortgages of private property, the Government being merely collateral guarantee for the amount, and so on. The one important liability is one of thirty-five lakhs due to bankers, which must be liquidated in cash. The State is perfectly solvent, and cannot be said to be in any serious difficulty whatever.

Mr. Gorst says that when the revenue was farmed, the farmers, though they exacted all they prudently could from the ryots, stopped short at the point at which the capacity to go on paying the rent would cease, but that now the country is ruined by the exactions of the Government officials. Mr. Gorst, when he wrote this, had not read the Resident's Administration Report for 1869-70, from which I need quote only two short sentences: "Owing chiefly to the abolition of the baneful system of former times by which the

collection of the revenue was farmed out to contractors, disturbances in the interior of the country had become rare. The Hyderabad Contingent had not fired a shot except on its own parade grounds since the suppression of the mutinies." Under the farming system the Contingent was always out to overcome the resistance of the despairing ryots. As to the general character of the improvements effected, let us see what Sir Richard Temple, then Resident at Hyderabad, wrote to the Government of India on the 16th August 1867: "In the Deccan of late years the constitution, system, and principle of the Nizam's civil government are really excellent. This much is certain."

Sensational stories, artistically embellished, cannot be weighed against this testimony, which might easily be supplemented did space permit. "A few months ago, at a village in the Deccan," says Mr. Gorst, "three men were standing in the scorching sun with heavy stones upon their heads. They were subjects of the Nizam, who had not paid the full Government rent for their lands. . . . After enduring the torture for twenty-four hours, they yielded, sold their bullocks, paid their rent, and what is since become of them and their families, God only knows or cares." This story makes an excruciating exordium to Mr. Gorst's article on "The Kingdom of the Nizam." He does not say where he found the story, and what considerable emendations he made in it. Major-General C. L. R. Glasford was, upon his retirement from the British service, engaged by the late Sir Salar Jung as Settlement Commissioner of the Nizam's dominions, with a view to a new settlement of the Land Assessment, and the correction of abuses. He was sent into the dis-

tricts to ascertain the condition of the ryots and to report thereon to the Government. He reported that in certain areas the ryots were in a very depressed condition, into which they had been gradually falling "for the last four or five years," partly in consequence of heavy and unequal assessments, and partly owing to bad harvests, and he, therefore, recommended that the revenue due last November should not be collected for a couple of months, so that the sugar-cane and other crops would enable them to pay the Government demand. But the chief cause of the distress and dissatisfaction prevailing was the prohibition since 1880 of the lucrative cultivation of the poppy, the British Government objecting to the competition with its own opium. General Glasford writes: "All ryots complain of rents being high; so long as they cultivated poppy, they managed to exist, but since that cultivation is prohibited they are in a bad way." The story of the three ryots is given in the 10th paragraph of his report. He says that they were obliged to stand in front of the local functionary's office in the village of Goorjwara *in the rain* (not in the "scorching sun," which in India is quite a different thing), and they were kept there, not "for twenty-four hours" but until they consented to sell their bullocks and pay their rent. He reported this case of oppression, amongst others less serious, to the Government. Of the relevant but prosaic facts that the agricultural distress was of recent origin, and was due to exceptional causes, and that a British officer was sent by the Hyderabad Government to improve matters and report on grievances, not a word is said by Mr. Gorst.

Of course, in introducing the British system of ad-

ministration into Hyderabad, it was absolutely essential to the working of the scheme to import with it native officials trained under the British Government. There was no trained civil service in Hyderabad, and natives of the country could make nothing of the new system. It is not for us to denounce as a crime the introduction of foreign administrators to work a system of government which is novel to the people. Sir Salar Jung established schools and a college for the purpose of educating native talent, and with some degree of success. He would gladly have strengthened his administration by bestowing a larger share of the higher Government patronage upon his friends, and possibly his opponents, in Hyderabad, if such a course had been possible. But as it was, he was obliged to apply to the Government of India for the loan of the officials whom he needed to work the new departments. To represent the men whose services were thus indentured upon and accorded, as constituting an agency of seditious intrigues for the furtherance of plots for the overthrow of the British power, is wild and mischievous. There is not a shadow of foundation for the allegation.

I have spoken of Sir Salar Jung's contact with Lord Lytton as marking the end of his reform work. The Hyderabad statesman regarded the assignment of the Berars under the administration of his uncle as a sort of family misfortune, and he regarded it as a sacred duty to get the territory restored. This was his great aim throughout his career, and it was to pave the way to its realisation that he laboured so unremittingly to reorganise the Government, restore the finances, and get a handsome surplus in lieu of the ever-recurring

deficits. In 1869-70 the Resident reported that there was a surplus of £80,000, and for some years thereafter the revenue was very flourishing. The Nizam's State Railway absorbed a million sterling, and first disarranged his finances. His idea was to have so large a balance that the payment of the Contingent—if he could not get that force abolished—could never again be in doubt, and that then he could ask for the rendition of the Berars, as the mortgage would be no longer necessary. In 1874 he and his Co-Regent, Shums-ul-Umra, preferred a claim for the assigned provinces. The despatch was returned by the Resident, who refused even to forward it to the Government of India. After much fencing a despatch was sent to Lord Salisbury direct. The proceeding was irregular, but it was not the only one that was open to exception. An intimation was given that if the subject of the despatch was brought to Lord Salisbury's notice in London by Sir Salar Jung, who contemplated a visit to that city, it might be considered. To London the Minister proceeded, and he was told to put his case in a new despatch when he returned to India, and send it to the Government of India for the Secretary of State. This threw the matter over into 1877, when the despatch having been sent in, Lord Salisbury wrote a reply promising that the question would be considered when the young Nizam came of age, provided that all the treaties between the British Government and the Nizamat were submitted to revision. Whether this skilful postponement of the question constituted a success or a rebuff for Sir Salar Jung, we need not now discuss. But Sir Salar had at least got the India Office to receive his claim

and to give him a reply, which was more than he could get the Government of India to do. Besides, he had a great social success in the metropolis; the stories that came out to India had it that the Regent of Hyderabad was received by personages of great consequence, as if he were himself a sovereign prince, and that he was everywhere made much of flattered. All this and more of the same kind was not more gratifying than might be supposed to Lord Lytton and other authorities in India, and it certainly paved the way for future troubles. The notion got about that Sir Salar was getting *tête moniée*, and would set the Government of India at defiance if he were not brought to his senses. And at the Imperial Assemblage in January 1877 the first opportunity presented itself for trying conclusions with him and seeing whether he could not be made to know his place. Every one who was at Delhi on that historic occasion knew that the relations between Lord Lytton and Sir Salar Jung were strained to a degree, and the situation became extremely embarrassing for both parties. Eventually, however, diplomacy and an admirable reticence covered the breach, and the endeavour to bring the Regent to a sense of his entire dependence on the Government of India was adjourned to a more convenient season.

Soon afterwards the Co-Regent, the sensible and unassuming Shums-ul-Umra, died, and Sir Salar imagined that as he himself had been the guiding spirit of the Government throughout, he would now be allowed to carry on the administration until the Nizam came of age without being hampered by a colleague. He was mistaken. Lord Lytton resolved to bind him hand

and foot there and then. There was a certain nobleman, Vikar-ul-Umra, half-brother of Shums-ul-Umra, who had been, since 1853, the declared enemy of the British Government, and of Sir Salar Jung, whose system of administration was avowedly based on the British model. He was perpetually engaged in plots against the Minister. Having been found out in a clumsy attempt to bribe the wife of the Resident to induce her husband to bring about Sir Salar's downfall, he was, after a formal inquiry, excluded from the Residency, and from all office in Hyderabad, the Government of India pronouncing him to have incurred "complete political extinction." This was the man who was selected to be Sir Salar Jung's colleague in the Regency. Sir Salar Jung resisted strenuously, and said that he would prefer to resign. He was informed that his resignation would be accepted. What this would have involved was shown when it became necessary to find a man to carry on the government after his death in 1883. His repugnance was finally overcome. With a colleague who was intended to be his master, and who was, besides being a personal enemy, an ignorant and incompetent administrator unacquainted with public affairs, it was wholly impossible to carry on the work of government as it has hitherto been conducted. Sir Salar Jung's attention was directed to maintaining his own position. There was a continual struggle with the Co-Regent and the Residency. The reforms which were in progress were neglected, and things generally got into a bad way.

When Lord Ripon succeeded to the Viceroyalty, he was naturally anxious to put an end to so disastrous a state of things, which was due mainly to persons

pique and distrust. He manifested towards Sir Salar Jung something of the old confidence and sympathy, and it was gratefully reciprocated. When the Co-Regent died, Sir Salar was made sole Regent. He at once proceeded to resume and improve his schemes of reform, and the services of General Glasford were asked for in order to overhaul the Land Assessment, and correct abuses which had sprung up in connection therewith. This work had been scarcely begun when the Regent was cut off by cholera in February 1883. There being no man in Hyderabad fitted to succeed him, the Government of India, by the advice of Sir Steuart Bayley, constituted a provisional administration, as has been already mentioned. The scheme did not succeed owing to the perversity of the Peshcar, who never allowed it to have even a trial, and before a year had elapsed, a new arrangement became imperative.

It is assumed that Lord Ripon could and ought to have prevented the Nizam from assuming the sovereignty when he was 18, and that he should himself have appointed some able and competent man, presumably the Peshcar, as Prime Minister, instead of the young Salar Jung. The majority of the Nizam was fixed by law and custom, and could not be delayed. The choice of a Dewan rested with His Highness, the Viceroy's interference in the matter being wholly confined to advice. Both Lord Hardinge and Lord Dalhousie had expressly refused to overrule the appointment of objectionable Ministers, saying that it was entirely for the Nizam to choose his Dewan, and that the Supreme Government could only interfere if disorder or anarchy supervened on a bad choice. The

departure from this rule in the case of Chandu Lall at an earlier period, did not constitute an encouraging precedent for Lord Ripon to follow in the interest of that Peshcar's grandson.

A few weeks before the installation the Nizam and all the Members of the Council of Regency, except Bushir-ud-Dowlah, visited Calcutta to see the Exhibition, and the opportunity was thus afforded the Viceroy of meeting them and becoming acquainted at first-hand with their opinions and proposals. The Council included every man at all in the running for the Prime Ministership, and it may be said that each of them recommended himself for that exalted and honourable position, with the single exception of young Vikar-ul-Umra who, having no chance of the post, suggested that there should be no Dewan, but that the Government should be carried on by a Council. The possible alternatives to Salar Jung, who was the choice of the Nizam, were—(1) the Peshcar, who was very old and infirm, addicted to opium, and without method or diligence in business. His administration, since Sir Salar Jung's death, was pronounced on all authority to have been a failure, and business had been brought to a deadlock. Of this last fact abundant evidence was adduced when the Viceroy was at Hyderabad. (2) Koorshed Jah, Amir-i-Kabir, chief of the Shums-ul-Umra family, which has always been regarded as the head of the retrograde party in Hyderabad, and with whom opposition to the late Sir Salar Jung and dislike of his policy may be said to be a tradition. His accession to power would, therefore, have meant a reversal of Sir Salar Jung's administrative reforms, and a return to old and mischievous methods of

government. He had had no training whatever in public affairs. Of all the postulants he was personally the least acceptable to the Nizam, for being already the head of the most powerful family in Hyderabad, and disposing of a private fortune of a hundred and fifty thousand a year, he would, if made Dewan, have become an all-powerful figure, overshadowing perhaps the Sovereign himself, and depriving him of his due influence in the Government of the State. (3) Bushir-ud-Dowlah, a cousin and rival of Koorshed Jah, who had more experience of business than the latter, but had the reputation of being indolent and apathetic, and was not recommended by anybody. (4) The Vikar-ul-Umra, the younger brother of Koorshed Jah. He is a young nobleman of good manners, speaking English well, but he is without experience or any marked capacity. His private affairs are said to be much involved. As a member of the Shums-ul-Umra family, he was, of course, open to the same objections as his elder brother. If none of these four men could well have been recommended to the Nizam in preference to Salar Jung, an outsider must have been sought, if the Nizam's choice were to be overruled. But it would have been difficult to find a suitable man, and it was represented on the best authority that all factions would unite against a "foreigner," and that his position would be impossible. And it would have been a step difficult to justify, to press the Nizam, at the very commencement of his reign, to adopt a course which would have been in the highest degree unpopular with his people.

Under these circumstances it was impossible to say that there was any single individual who could be deemed preferable to Salar Jung. Both at Calcutta

and at Hyderabad the Nizam stated his strong desire that the son of Sir Salar Jung should be Prime Minister. His Highness had confidence that he would carry on the government on the lines laid down by his father, and that the officials who alone had administrative knowledge would work with him. They would not work with the Peshcar, nor he with them; they represented systems that could not harmonise. Lord Ripon was favourably impressed by the young Nizam, who was sensible and fairly well informed, and appeared to have in him the makings of a good ruler. The youth of Salar Jung, who was only 21 years of age, was felt by the Viceroy to be an objection. But it was the only objection that could be urged, and it was one which would mend. He was a young man of exceptional capacity, anxious for work, and full of an ambition to tread in his father's foot-steps. The stories as to his indulging in dissipated habits were unsupported by a single scrap of evidence, and were not believed by those who knew him best. And the same may be said of the shameful libels levelled at the Nizam himself. So far from being plunged in the excesses of the Zenana, the Nizam's first act when he was given power was to remove from the Zenana and live in a Palace apart, with the mother of his infant son. The talk about his drinking habits is of the same kind. It says a good deal for the fibre of the young Prince so recklessly charged with effeminacy, that soon after his recovery from the cholera attack which recently nearly proved fatal to him, we went out into the jungle for several days to hunt, and succeeded in killing a tiger.

In acquiescing in the Nizam's choice of a Prime Minister, the Viceroy took the only course consistent

with political prudence. To have overruled it would have been to incur a serious responsibility in setting at naught the legal right of the Sovereign of the country, and the general opinion of Hyderabad, which was strongly in favour of the Dewanship being continued in the family of Sir Salar Jung.

The most significant circumstance connected with the installation of the Nizam is one which does not appear to have struck Mr. Gorst at all. The Viceroy and Governor-General was present in Hyderabad to place the Nizam upon the gadi, at the spontaneous invitation of His Highness himself, who, at Calcutta, asked Lord Ripon personally to come to his capital and instal him on the throne of his ancestors. Lord Ripon, far from suggesting this unlooked-for manifestation of confidence and good-will, at first felt himself obliged by the pressure of urgent business at Calcutta to hesitate before accepting the invitation. But His Highness was only the more cordial, and in the result the Viceroy proceeded to Hyderabad, where, in the name of the Queen-Empress, he installed the Nizam upon the gadi. This was the most gratifying and significant political event of these latter years. It demonstrated, what every competent observer who has given a thought to the course of events in India knows well, that infinitely more can be accomplished by a sympathetic policy, having due regard to the susceptibilities of those concerned, than by a high-handed assertion of supremacy, which excites alarm, and bitter, if unavowed, resentment. Mr. Gorst's complaint is that Lord Ripon did not improve the occasion by arbitrarily ignoring the Nizam's legal majority in order to place the Government of Hyderabad in the

hands of the eccentric statesman, who, according to his own account, abhors foreigners and loves to transact business of State in a cellar. Few people in India will regret that this singular policy did not recommend itself to the Governor-General. As for the young Nizam, the task before him is arduous enough, one might suppose, to render it superfluous to add to his difficulties by such an attack as that which Mr. Goist has levelled at him, by way of an acknowledgment of the hospitality—to say nothing of the pomps and vanities—which that eminent Queen's Counsel shared so recently with others less severely virtuous than himself.

GRATTAN GEARY.

SIMLA, *June*, 1884.



